

Town of Mansfield
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Meeting of 14 November 2012
Conference B, Audrey P. Beck Building
(draft) MINUTES

Members present: Joan Buck (Alt.), Neil Facchinetti, Quentin Kessel, Scott Lehmann, John Silander. *Members absent:* Aline Booth (Alt.), Robert Dahn, Peter Drzewiecki, Frank Trainor. *Others present:* Grant Meitzler (Wetlands Agent), Linda Painter (Town Planner), Pat Suprenant.

1. The meeting was **called to order** at 7:30p by Chair Quentin Kessel. Alternate Joan Buck was designated a voting member for this meeting.

2. “Proposed open-space purchases” was added (under “New Business”) to the **agenda**, which was reordered to accommodate the Town Planner.

3. The draft **minutes of the 17 October 2012 meeting** were approved as written.

4. Painter distributed a memo from Town Manager Matt Hart requesting comments (by 04 December) on the draft **UConn Water Supply Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE)**, released on 06 November. Attached were copies of the Executive Summary, Chapter 1 (Introduction), and Chapter 12 (Selection of Preferred Alternative). {The full draft is available via links at <http://www.ct.gov/ceq/view.asp?a=987&Q=24943&ceqNav=%7C#EIE>.}

New water needed in 2060 by UConn and the Town is estimated at 1.23 million gallons per day (on average, including a 15% margin of safety). This reflects an increase (over previous estimates) of 0.38 mgd for the proposed UConn Technology Park. Of the potential sources studied, the only ones capable of supplying this amount of water were Windham Water Works (WWW, from Willimantic Reservoir), Connecticut Water Company (CWC, from Shenipsit Reservoir and CWC ground sources), and Metropolitan District Commission (MDC, from Barkhamsted and Nepaug Reservoirs). Capital costs (piping, pump stations, upgrading water treatment plants, etc.) are estimated at \$20.3M for the CWC option and \$47.6M for either WWW or MDC. Piping would be under or along existing roadways. Potential environmental costs are increased development along the route of the new water line and reduced streamflows from the source reservoirs.

In discussion, Kessel wondered if imported water could supply all of UConn and Mansfield’s water needs. Were the Fenton and Willimantic wells no longer needed, it might be good for the Fenton and Willimantic Rivers but could also permit development in what are currently aquifer protection areas. Ms. Suprenant noted that the CWC and MDC options may be more difficult to reconcile with state and town plans of conservation and development than the WWW option, which would be built within Mansfield.

Commission members agreed to read the documents provided and to decide by Monday, 19 November, whether to convene a special meeting at 4:00p on Tuesday, 27 November, to formulate comments on the EIE.

5. Painter reported that members of the advisory committee on siting UConn’s **Hazardous Waste Transfer Station** will be asked to score alternative sites (using various criteria developed by the committee) before the next meeting. The committee will then attempt to assemble the rankings of individual members into a committee ranking.

6. **Swan Lake Diversion.** The DEEP is asking (letter dated 22 October) UConn for more

information regarding its proposal to reduce storm-water flows in the Eagleville Brook watershed through low impact development (rain gardens, pervious pavement, etc.). If run-off into Eagleville Brook could be reduced in this way, UConn could avoid doing so by diverting run-off into the Fenton River watershed via Swan Lake, as proposed in the UConn master drainage plan. Such a diversion would dump polluted water into a public water supply watershed.

7. Open Space. A public hearing will be held on Monday, 26 November, on the proposed purchase of two parcels of land for open space, one near Wolf Rock, the other near Dunhamtown Forest. Both parcels are interior properties with no frontage and abut existing natural areas owned by the Town or Joshua's Trust. The Commission agreed unanimously (**motion:** Kessel, Lehmann) to recommend purchase of these properties.

8. Referrals.

a. W1505 & PZC#1214-3 (Beacon Hill Estates II, Mansfield City Rd.) Relative to the earlier proposal discussed by the Commission on 18 July, a conservation easement has been added to lot 37 along its southern boundary line so that open space to the east is connected to state land to the west; however, the size of the conservation easement on the western portion of lot 36 has been reduced accordingly. After some discussion, the Commission agreed unanimously (**motion:** Kessel, Buck) on the following comment:

The Commission is disappointed that so much of the open space dedication is wetland (with extensive barberry), which the developer could not have developed in the first place. It urges that conservation easements be drafted so as to permit a trail for public use from the dedicated open space on the east to State land on the west.

b. W1507 (Shifrin, Kirby Mill Hydro Project) This application for a wetlands permit is essentially identical to one made (and granted) in 2006, as modified in 2010. That permit has expired, so a re-application is required. Concerning the original application (W1339), the Commission commented on 15 February 2006 that "the CC supports, in principle, the reestablishment of this hydroelectric power plant. Assuming the other permits, e.g., from the Army Corps of Engineers, the DEP (including the fisheries division), etc., are in place, the CC perceives no significant negative impact on the wetlands involved." The Commission agreed unanimously to the following **motion** (Lehmann, Kessel) regarding W1507:

Inasmuch as the project described in this application is essentially identical to the one covered by the original 2006 permit, as modified in 2010, the Commission foresees no significant impact on wetlands.

{Lehmann participated in the IWA Field Trip to this site earlier in the day; his report is attached.}

9. 2013 meeting schedule. The Commission approved a meeting schedule for 2013 specifying monthly meetings at 7:30p on the third Wednesday of the month. {The draft schedule from the Planning Office incorrectly indicates that the August meeting will be on 14 August instead of 21 August 2013.}

10. Adjourned at 9:13p. Next meeting: 7:30p, Wednesday, 19 December 2012.

Scott Lehmann, Secretary, 16 November 2012.

Attachment: 14 Nov. IWA Field Trip Report

W1507 (Shirfin, Kirby Mill Hydro Project). The original permit (as modified in 2010) for this project has expired, and the Shirfins must reapply. The proposal is essentially identical to the one covered by the expired permit. It calls for constructing a new small hydro installation at the Kirby Mill as a test laboratory and demonstration project for the efficient turbine design developed by the Shirfins. Head will be provided by the existing Kirby Mill Dam. The headrace will initially follow the course of the old headrace before angling slightly toward the river to a new powerhouse with room for five small side-by-side turbines; discharge will be via a tailrace broader than the old one, but following the same course. The headrace will be enclosed in square-box concrete culvert covered by soil. The tailrace will be in wetland, as will the beginning of the headrace. Construction would occur during summer, when low flows are expected; a haybale fence and settling pond is specified to keep construction sediment out of the river. Mr. Shirfin hopes to complete the project in 2013. He indicated that it should improve fish habitat in this reach of the river by diverting high flows that flush fish downstream.

Scott Lehmann